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*07* 6 (Amended). A system for establishing instant messaging between a first user associated with a first realm and a second user associated with a second realm over the Internet, said system comprising:

*08* a first and a second device for operation by said first and second users respectively, each device including a screen to display information, a selector or other input device for giving and receiving commands and selections, a communication port arranged to communicate with other users over the Internet, and an IM component arranged to establish IM sessions during which said first and second users can exchange one of instant messages and other information over the Internet, said IM component including means for receiving a request for an IM session and means for generating a request for said IM session; said IM component including an IM database storing a protocol for the other realm; and

an IM database arranged to store a list of users registered to access instant messaging and being currently active together with their current IP address; wherein said IM component is arranged to receive a command from said first user to establish said IM session with said second user and in response to said request said IM component is arranged to obtain the current IP address of said second user and to send an access request to said second user based on said IP address and said protocol and to establish said IM session if said access request is accepted.

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10 (Amended). The system of claim 6 wherein each said first and second device is arranged to display a window on said screen, said window identifying a list of friends of the corresponding user, said friends being currently on line.

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11 (Amended). The system of claim 10 wherein said first device is adapted to display a message area in one of said window and a separate window.

12 (Amended). The system of claim 11 wherein each said device is adapted to receive commands from the respective user to establish a first IM session between said first user and said second user and a second IM session between said first user and a third user, said third user being identified in said window.

13 (Amended). The system of claim 12 wherein said first device is adapted to allow said first user to switch between said first IM session and said second IM session, said first and second IM sessions being active simultaneously.

14 (Amended). The system of claim 13 wherein said first device is adapted to display in said message area messages with said second user during said first IM session and messages with said third user during said second IM session.

15 (Amended). The system of claim 10 wherein said first device is adapted to show characteristics of said friends.

16 (Amended). A method of conducting an instant messaging session between a first user and a second user over the Internet, the users being associated with two different realms, each realm being accessible via the Internet using a protocol characteristic to the realm, each user getting access to the Internet via a respective first and second device, at least one device having a storage media for storing the characteristic protocol of the other realm, the method comprising the steps of:

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determining a current IP address of the second user; and

establishing a connection from said first and second users using said current IP address and said characteristic protocol.

17 (Amended). The method of claim 16 wherein each time one of said first and second users access the Internet, the corresponding device sends a message to an IM database indicating that the corresponding user is on line and said current IP address.

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19 (Amended). The method of claim 17 further comprising sending a connection request from the first to the second device for establishing said instant message session.

20 (Amended). The method of claim 19 further comprising generating a response to said connection request by said second device accepting said connection request.

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22 (Amended). The method of claim 16 further comprising displaying a window on the screen of said first and second devices, said window indicating a list of active users.